

Contributions

MOSES, THE LAW GIVER

J. L. GILLIN

"Did not Moses give you the Law?" Jno. 7:19.

Three months after their departure from Egypt the host of Israel arrived at Sinai. Here Moses had often been when tending sheep for his father-in-law in Midian. Travelers tell us that the valley beneath Sinai is well adapted because of its abundant water and good pasturage to serve as a stopping place for an immense company like that of Israel.

Sinai is one of the most sublime sceneries on earth. And it was especially so now when God manifested his presence in a thick smoke-cloud, in flashing lightnings, in fire and in thunders upon the summit of the mountain.

Moses called up to the mountain by God, came back with God's promises to Israel provided they kept his commandments. And Israel stirred to a sense of gratitude by God's wondrous leadings and provisions for their needs thus far, promised to do all that the Lord had said.

After a three days' sanctification on the part of the people, Moses was called up to the top of Mt. Sinai to receive the Law.

THE LAWS OF MOSES

After a sublime manifestation of Himself to the people in thunders and lightnings and "the voice of the trumpet" on the mount, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

We want to examine these laws. That they are extraordinary in their scope and depth, we shall try to show.

They are a new thing on earth. Centuries had to elapse before Lycurgus and Solon among the Greeks and centuries more before Rome gave the world laws in anywise like these.

The laws of Moses differ from those of Egypt in many ways.

The Ten Commandments of themselves mark a stage in the history of law. Only ten of them, yet they are so fundamental that they touch the whole round of human duty.

Never before in laws for the government of a people was God recognized as but one. Here Israel is made acquainted with the fact that their God is one god. No polytheism for Israel. In this Decalogue was a radical departure from all existing laws.

The second commandment, that against images of God, was as radical and far-reaching in its tendencies. Every nation hitherto had perished from vices nourished by their religion. There could be no tolerated idolatry for Israel. Long was the struggle before Israel learned this lesson. Terrible the punishments whereby she was taught that idolatry was destructive, but after their return from the exile at Babylon, we hear of idolatry no more among the Jews.

The third law against profaning God's name, made criminal the using of that name

for magic, witchcraft, or profane swearing, and struck at the root of that irreverence of holy things which so destroys character. Nowhere else among the nations was such a law found and nowhere else were their gods revered. One cannot read the classics without feeling the irreverence which the great writers felt for their gods which led to unbelief.

The fourth law, on the observance of one day in seven as a holy day lays the foundation for the observance by a nation of the law written in our bodies requiring a day of rest and worship. No nation can be civilized which disregards this day or turns it from a holy day to a holiday.

The fifth law, against the common disregard of the rights due to parents shows the same radical departure from existing laws and marks a step in advance for the people who should receive such a law. Nothing so demoralizes young lives as the spirit of dishonor often shown to parents. The commandment has a promise.

The sixth called attention to the sacredness of life in a day when life was held cheap.

The seventh, held up a standard of chastity and personal purity in a day of great unchastity, when among the nations unchastity was a condition of service to the gods.

The eighth, put a lawful ban upon the common insecurity of property. No people can become civilized who hold loose views of property.

The ninth law prohibits that looseness of tongue which invents or repeats improved reports against our neighbors.

The tenth goes to the very root of sin and forbids a *desire* to possess that which is another's. This is a law against covetousness, the parent of so many sins.

THE CHARACTER OF THESE LAWS

These laws mark an advance great and radical in their character and in their tendencies. Nowadays, we hear it said that laws should not be enacted which are ahead of the moral sentiment of the people. Here are laws given by God himself, which were centuries ahead of the people to whom they were given. They stood before this people as a continual standard of the morality up to which they ought to live, and thus performed the educative function of laws.

They were ideal laws to which Israel never did and never could attain unto in their own strength. But no taming down of the standard of righteousness to the desire of the people is found here. Therefore, these laws became the world's schoolmaster to lead it to Christ. Gal. 3:24.

We have not time here to mark out the character of the sanitary and ceremonial laws which Moses gave to the people of Israel. But if the fame of Moses as a law giver were to rest on the Decalogue alone, it were forever established.

No such code of laws was ever known on earth. And, surely, we do not say too much when we say of the man who was so honored as to receive and promulgate such a code,

that he was the greatest law-giver of the ages, Christ excepted. He gave us laws which lie at the foundation of all civilized governments, and which mould the opinions of men in every land where they are known. Surely, in such a man's life the last to be spoken of are his "mistakes."

ALONE WITH GOD

GEO. C. CARPENTER

It is "more than good, it is blessed" to be alone with God. We love to be alone with our earthly friends, especially with those who are very near and dear unto us, but how about our nearest and dearest friend? Is the Lord Jesus Christ your best friend? Do you enjoy seasons of prayer, and communion (conversation with the Father.) times of refreshing, and special baptisms of his spirit? It is often well for us to stop and ask ourselves how much life, spiritual life, we have, how much of the spirit of the Master is manifest in our every-day words and actions, and how much we try to "do always the things that are pleasing to Him." The more we are alone with God, the more we become like Him. For growth is toward the likeness of those things we think upon. Think about God, grow in godliness. Think thots of love, grow in loveliness. Think thots of sin, grow in sinfulness. "The value of a thot cannot be told." Shakesheare said, "Our thots are ours, their ends none of our own." Guard well thy thots if you would be a man.

Someone recently said that there is nothing in this world more beautiful than pure, true, brilliant young manhood or young womanhood. "Youth! youth! how bouyant are thy hopes! they turn like marigold toward the sunny side." Thanks be to God that they do. When young manhood and young womanhood are what God intended them to be, they are the purest and sweetest and most beautiful things in the world; but too often they fall short of their appointed beauty. Young people, let us banish every sinful thot that comes to us, and as we banish them, look up and say in a loving, pleading way, Lord, help me. The pure in heart become a medium for transmitting God's thot to others. Let us spend more time alone with God, that we may become pure in heart, and that God may illuminate our souls with the shining light of love and life.

NEGLECTED BIBLE TRUTH

I. D. BOWMAN

In treating briefly the important subject assigned us we will only consider the most weighty Bible truths.

1. We will examine Bible truth neglected by the Christian church at large, but not by the Brethren church.

1. Christ should be the only Lawgiver and the New Testament the only legislative power of the church. By precept and example these two fundamental truths should be constantly taught. For the first three centuries they were universally accepted. Human creeds were unknown. Subsequently